

OWP HOT TOPICS
2017-03-03

This Week--

(Potential Item for R8 Weekly to EPA HQs)

DRINKING WATER VIOLATION AT WIDEFIELD WATER AND SANITATION

DISTRICT: The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) informed the Region 8 Drinking Water Program last week that the Widefield Water & Sanitation District exceeded the MCL for total trihalomethanes (or TTHM, a disinfection byproduct) this quarter. This violation requires them to send public notice to all customers, which CDPHE expects will take place in the next week or two. Given the perfluorinated compound (PFC) contamination in the area, this public notice may gain a lot of attention, including with the media. While this violation does not directly relate to the PFC contamination (there's no relationship between the two groups of contaminants), it has been implicitly caused by the PFC issues. Widefield continues to use surface water instead of drawing water from their wells to keep levels of PFCs below the health advisories. Levels of TTHM present in the surface water increase with the long residence times needed to move that water to all parts of the Widefield system, leading to this violation. No other public water systems in this area are affected by the TTHM violation. **Contact: Sarah Bahrman, 312-6243.**

Clean Water Act § 401 Certifications for the 2017 Corps of Engineers (Corps) §404

Nationwide Permits (NWP): The Aquifer and Aquatic Resource Protection Unit is developing § 401 Water Quality Certifications (certifications) for Corps 2017 NWPs that would be used for activities on Tribal Lands in Region 8. The NWPs administered by the Corps are reauthorized every five years. EPA provides certifications for activities on Tribal lands where the tribes do not have Treatment in a Similar Manner as a State for water quality standards under the Clean Water Act. The certifications provide conditions on the NWPs to protect water quality from the effects of activities covered under the NWPs. The certifications are due to the Corps on **March 6, 2017**; certifications not received by March 6, 2017 are considered waived by the Corps. The certifications made by the Office of Water Protection will certify water quality for 11 of the 52 NWPs with general conditions, including a preconstruction notification requirement, and deny certification for 41 of the NWPs to allow the EPA and the Tribes to further review project impacts with a higher potential to affect water quality. Projects that qualify for the use of a NWP for which certification has been granted must notify the appropriate Tribal Environmental Program and the EPA, but may proceed without further written verification from the EPA. Projects that qualify for the use of a NWP for which certification has been denied must request an individual project certification from the EPA. Individual certification allows the EPA and the Tribes to add conditions ensuring water quality is protected. This mix of waiver, condition, and denial is very similar to previous cycles of reauthorized NWPs and is based on the Region's experience in reviewing NWPs for 401 certification on Tribal lands. The AARPU is concluding consultation with Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes of the Fort Belknap Indian Community and the Oglala Sioux, (tribes which responded affirmatively to Region 8's offer of consultation) and is drafting the certification letter for signature by the OWP ARA. **Contacts: Brent Truskowski 312-6235, Toney Ott 312-6909, Peter Brumm 406-457-5029.**

Next Week--

(Potential Item for R8 Weekly to EPA HQs)

DRAFT UIC PERMITS ISSUED FOR DEWEY BURDOCK ISR SITE (UPDATE): We expect to issue draft UIC permits and a proposed aquifer exemption decision on March 6th to Powertech USA, Inc. for a proposed uranium in-situ recovery (ISR) project northwest of Edgemont, South Dakota. There will be a 75-day public comment period, and four public outreach events (including hearings) in late April and early May near the site to allow ample opportunity for tribes and other stakeholders to comment. We will continue to encourage interested tribes to consult with us through the permitting process. Because of the tribal concerns raised and the proximity of this project to the Dakota Access Pipeline where some of the same Tribes are engaged (e.g., Standing Rock Sioux, Cheyenne River Sioux), we expect high visibility of and interest in this proposed permitting activity. Region 8's UIC program in the Office of Water Protection and the Public Affairs program are coordinating closely at various levels with OW, OGWDW, OITA, OAR, OPA and OGC. **Contacts: Sarah Bahrman, 312-6243; Douglas Minter, 312-6079; and Valois Shea, 312-6276.**

OWP WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT

Last Week

(Item for R8 Weekly to EPA HQs)

Region 8 Speaker at Montana Rural Water Association Conference – On February 23 the Montana Rural Water Association held its annual conference in Great Falls, Montana. The Region was represented by its Office of Water Protection Deputy Assistant Regional Administrator who made opening remarks, along with Same Wade, CEO of the National Rural Water Association; Tom Livers, Director of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality; and John Tubbs, Director of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. DNRC administers Montana's state revolving funds. This meeting provides training and certification to over 300 operators of rural waters systems from across the states. Two notable impressions from the meetings are: because these small systems carry heavy responsibilities in providing clean drinking water with very limited and isolated staff and little back-up, streamlining their regulatory implementation is important to their success. Further, as populations in these small rural communities decline and their aging systems need greater maintenance or require upgrades the associated costs become unsustainable as they fall on a diminishing number of ratepayers. **Contact: Bert Garcia, (303) 312-6670.**

This Week

WATER QUALITY WORKSHOP: IMPACTING YOUR FARM'S BOTTOM LINE EPA, CDPHE, NRCS, and others sponsored a workshop held in La Junta, Colorado focused on agriculture in the Lower Arkansas basin. The more than 80 attendees included local agriculture producers, water districts, conservation districts, environmental groups, academia, and state and federal agencies. Participants learned about agricultural practices that improve water quality while preserving or improving the farmer's economics. Surface and ground water in this part of

Colorado is impacted by selenium, uranium, and salinity which can be detrimental to public health, fish, and ag production. Some local ag practices contribute to the pollution, and voluntary BMPs are sought to reduce their impact. EPA has partnered with CDPHE, NRCS and local stakeholders to develop a water quality workgroup focused on improving water quality through education, such as this workshop, and on the ground projects. ***For more information, contact Judy Bloom, 312-6395.***

REGION 8 HOSTING DRINKING WATER LEAD CORROSION CONTROL

TREATMENT TRAINING: Next week on March 8th and March 9th, staff from the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water and an EPA contractor will be conducting two 8-hour corrosion control trainings here in the Region 8 conference center. Over the course of the two days, we are expecting approximately 50 attendees from Region 8 states and Indian country. The list of attendees includes public officials from state drinking water programs, Indian Health Services, and the Bureau of Reclamation; representatives from water districts and water operators from public water systems; and engineering consultants and technical service providers that work with Region 8 drinking water systems in the field. Continuing education credits will be offered to those who complete the training. **Contacts: Natalie Cannon, 312-6625, Gwen Campbell, 312-6463, or Sarah Bahrman, 312-6243.**